



**Morris Museum**  
A SMITHSONIAN AFFILIATE

## **Spark!Lab Smithsonian Network Internship**

The Morris Museum and the Smithsonian's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation, based at the National Museum of American History, are seeking interns for Summer 2022. The internship will focus on public history, research and interpretation, and informal education, and will have two related pieces. Interns will spend approximately half of their weekly time facilitating in Spark!Lab, an interactive space for kids (and adults) to explore the process of invention. The other half of the time will focus on research and interpretation of the story of a local inventor, working virtually with Smithsonian staff and a cohort of interns from Spark!Lab sites across the US.

This internship requires a commitment of a minimum of ten weeks between May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with a weekly requirement of 30-40 hours including some weekend days. A stipend of \$1000 will be provided by the Smithsonian to offset technology costs, as well as a \$5,000 stipend from the Morris Museum. Interns are required to be able to report for the internship at a Spark!Lab Network site.

### **Project Description**

Originally opened at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in 2008, Spark!Lab is the flagship educational initiative of the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation. Spark!Lab is a dynamic learning space where children, families, and groups can create, innovate, collaborate, problem-solve, and invent. Through hands-on activities, they learn about the invention process, inventors and inventions in American history, and innovations that are changing our world today. Most importantly, they are empowered to create their own inventions and to solve problems in their own unique ways. Visitors don't follow step-by-step instructions or work to create a specific product. Instead, they identify problems and challenges, develop solutions, and put their own ideas into action—all while building important 21st century skills like creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and adaptability.

The Spark!Lab Network takes this unique approach to hands-on learning beyond the Smithsonian and into educational and cultural organizations across the United States and beyond. Spark!Lab at the Morris Museum welcomes inventors of all ages to create, innovate and collaborate.

**In Person Facilitation**

Spark!Lab is an interactive space for kids (and adults) to explore the process of invention! The Spark!Lab Interns will work under the guidance of Gabrielle Meyer, Director of Museum Learning and STEAM Interpretation, to assess and enhance the visitor experience in Spark!Lab, and develop inquiry based facilitation best practices for informal learning spaces.

Interns will learn the methods and practice of museum education by facilitating inquiry-based activities in Spark!Lab. Interns will be integral to the Spark!Lab team, and will work alongside staff and volunteer ambassadors. Through their work, Spark!Lab Interns will build relationships with our visitors and spark conversation in order to engage them in the invention process.

**Virtual Research and Interpretation**

Through the virtual portion of the internship, interns will get the chance to work with and learn from Smithsonian staff, including historians, curators, exhibit developers, and educators as they research and develop materials highlighting a local inventor whose story is not commonly known. Interns, as a cohort, will learn from Smithsonian staff and each other, as they research within their communities using local archives, museum and historical society collections, and other resources. Working with a local museum hosting a Spark!Lab Network site, each intern will develop material to present their research to the public, in a form best suited to the museum's Spark!Lab audience, such as poster, short video, public or school program, etc.

**How to Apply**

Students of all academic areas, especially candidates from underrepresented backgrounds are welcome to apply. Ideal candidates will be flexible, self-starters with experience working with the public or in customer service/visitor services, a passion for inspiring learning in others, and an enthusiasm for working in a public-facing, educational environment. A demonstrated interest in public history, education, or visitor services is recommended but not required.

To apply, please send your letter of intent and resume to Gabrielle Meyer [gmeyer@morrismuseum.org](mailto:gmeyer@morrismuseum.org). Applications are due by March 31, 2022.

Selected candidates will be required to additionally complete an application in SOLAA, the Smithsonian's platform for academic appointments.